

Our Initials Carved in my Heart by DeLoreanFlight

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Summary: Richie never believed that magical, mystical things like second chances existed. But now, even after 27 years, his heart goes crazy every damn time he sees Eddie. And maybe, just fucking maybe, the world is deciding to give him one. Oneshot Triger warnings: Lemon/Smut

Our Initials Carved in my Heart

Disclaimer: *this work is just for fun and pure fiction. The characters do not belong to me but to Stephen King and to Andy Muschetti's movie version. I wrote this just for entertaining purposes only.*

Author's note: *On September 5th, I went to see It: Chapter 2 premiere, and as much as I LOVED the movie, the ending broke my heart. It's funny because when I saw Chapter 1, I didn't realize there was a thing going on between Richie and Eddie, but the moment in which Richie didn't want to let Eddie go, I just realized he was in love with him, and then Richie's final scene in the bridge just got me. I cried and thought it was so unfair that they didn't have their happy ending, so as soon as I got out of the cinema, I decided to write it instead. This is what came out.*

Thanks to the lovely, amazing, Becks ragthyme on twitter who did an ace job proofreading and editing this fic for me. I hope you enjoy it as much as I enjoyed writing it.

This fic is dedicated to my Legal Losers Club groupchat on twitter. I'm thankful I got to know them and I think It for bringing us together.

The first thing that comes to Richie's mind as soon as they kill Pennywise is Eddie. It's literally the first thought he has. So when he rushes to tell him that they finally won, finally defeated that evil, he doesn't expect the sight he sees.

"Eddie, hey! We got him! We got Pennywise, man!"

Eddie stays quiet.

"Eddie?" Richie asks, holding his face. But Eddie doesn't answer. His eyes are wide open, but he is not responding.

They can hear the sound of the place starting crumble into pieces.

"Richie..." Richie hears Beverly say somewhere behind him.

"He's gone," Billy adds. Richie refuses to believe it; Eddie can't be dead, he just can't.

"It's alright. We gotta get him out of here. He's just hurt," Richie

replies, because this can't be true. Eddie's just unconscious and once they get out of here he will be okay. "He's just hurt, Ben. Bill, he's okay. We just gotta get him out of here."

He turns his head to Beverly, seeking for someone, just someone, to back up his idea.

"Bev."

"Richie..." Beverly says, sadness in her voice and eyes..

"What?" Richie replies, impatiently.

"H-hun, he's dead" she sobs. "We have to go. C'mon. C'mon, Richie"

"We gotta go, c'mon!" Bill shouts.

"C'mon, buddy!" He can hear Ben saying.

Richie holds on to Eddie's body, clinging to him like his life depended on it.

"Richie, c'mon, let go!"

"No, no! We can't leave him here, we can't!" Richies cries out loud.

"Richie..." Ben tries to say before he is interrupted by Richie's frantic pleas.

"No, I won't leave him here!" Richie repeats as he clutches Eddie's body tighter, refusing to let him go.

"Richie, the whole place is falling down, we need to leave right now." Mike shouts.

"No, no! I won't leave him, we can't leave him, we have to take him out of here!" He shouts. "C'mon, guys, we can't leave him here, please!" Richie begs one last time.

Bill looks at Richie's expression and nods.

"I'll help you."

It should be impossible, but they manage to escape, carrying Eddie's body with them. As soon as they leave the Neibolt House, everything starts falling down to pieces right in front of their eyes. They stop a moment to stare at the building crumbling down, reducing itself to nothing but dust. It's done. Pennywise is finally dead.

And then it hits him like a fucking truck. Richie realizes that Eddie's gone as well, that Eddie isn't just hurt or unconscious, that he really is dead. He can feel a black, cold hole starting to grow up inside his stomach and suddenly *his* whole world is falling down, too. All he can feel is pain and a dark agony piercing his chest.

Richie holds Eddie's lifeless body, and drops to the ground, bringing him close to himself and starts crying out loud, his uncontrollable sobs filling the formerly dead silence of the street.

"Eddie" he says, choking on air. "I love you."

Richie whispers that *I love you* against the crook of Eddie's neck, making it a secret for only him to hear. . A secret he wished he could have said earlier, when it wasn't too late, because now Eddie's dead and he will never know. He had the chance to say it to him but he didn't, and now it's just too late.

"I love you" he says again, this time louder, broken voice.

No one dares to speak. They just look at the way Richie doesn't want to let Eddie go, silent tears rolling down their cheeks, because Eddie was their friend too, even after 27 years.

"You were my first love," he whispers once more, because this is a secret that's meant for Eddie and nobody else.

Suddenly, Eddie gasps, inhaling violently.

"Holy shit!" Richie screams, and he doesn't know if it is an illusion or if it is really happening, but Eddie starts coughing weakly and then he realizes that it *is* real and that Eddie is actually *alive*.

"Oh my god, he's alive!" Richie cries out loud. "He's alive! Call the 911, somebody just, fuck, somebody just get an ambulance!"

Those twenty minutes as they wait are the longest twenty minutes of his life, and when he finally sees the ambulance on the horizon, he feels like he can breathe again.

Eddie's in a critical state and unconscious after a long-ass surgery. And how wouldn't he be? Pennywise fucking stabbed his chest with his fucking claw, but somehow, he made it alive, even after all the blood loss. Richie will never forget that. Not when his clothes were soaked with it, when his glasses were splattered with the blood that dripped, threateningly, from Eddie's mouth and onto the lenses.

Thing is... they don't know how they managed to stay alive, much less Eddie, and even less why the hospital personnel didn't question the state of their clothes, hair. But it is Derry, and Derry never really seemed to care about those things, so they just operated on Eddie, no questions asked. They were thankful, though, because it would have been fucking difficult to explain what happened without sounding like crazy people or without making it seem like they were the responsible ones.

A week later, Eddie is still in the hospital, fighting for his life and clinging to every last breath. And Richie is terrified, because he can't afford losing him again. He wouldn't be able to stand the same grief twice, and he thinks the universe can't be that cruel to give him back Eddie just to take him away after such a brief moment.

Another two weeks go by, and little by little, Eddie starts getting better. He's still unconscious, but his vital signs are improving, and slowly, his body also starts showing the necessary improvements: the skin starts recovering its color and the bags under his eyes are gone, but he is thinner than ever because is being fed by a tube. Richie hasn't left his side this whole time. He stays there everyday, only leaving the room when he needs to take a shower or when he needs to use the bathroom. He even eats next to Eddie, telling him jokes, stories, remembering the old days. Eddie doesn't reply, but Richie doesn't give up, hoping or trusting that Eddie can, at some point, listen.

He hasn't slept properly in days, because the guest bed is shit and because he keeps an open eye to see if Eddie finally wakes up. He

doesn't even care that his whole body hurts, that his neck is stiff, that he just feels so impossibly weak.

There's one day when Richie gathers up the courage to try something he had been dying to try for days, just to see if it works. He sits right next to him and holds Eddie's hand. It feels warm and soft, and Richie smiles because Eddie always had smooth skin. He stares at him, traces his eyes over the scar Bowers left on his cheek, caresses the back of Eddie's hand with his thumb, drawing circles over it. He starts speaking to him like he has been for weeks now, telling him how brave he was down there in the sewers, telling him that he should be proud of himself, confessing to him the way his heart literally stopped when Eddie almost died after saving him from the deadlights.

As if on cue, Eddie slightly opens his eyes.

"Richie..." Eddie weakly gasps before closing his eyes again and falling back again into Morpheus' arms.

Richie's heart starts pounding so fast he thinks he'll pass out. Eddie just spoke to him, actually *spoke* for the first time in weeks, so the only natural thing is calling the nurse. When she arrives, Richie tries to explain what happened, but the nurse tells him that there's no way that happened because they would have seen the activity on the monitor.

Richie's sure there must be a mistake, but he also knows that he wasn't just hallucinating.

"Richie, hun..." Beverly says, slowly walking into the hospital room with the other Losers. "Richie, you should get some rest, babe."

Beverly's eyes are pleading with him, but Richie refuses her suggestion and shakes his head. They try to force Richie into taking shifts watching over Eddie, to make Richie have a day off, but no matter how much they insisted, Richie didn't want to leave.

"It's okay, I'm okay," Richie replies, rubbing his fist against his tired eyes.

"Rich, buddy, you really need to take a break," Billy says.

It takes the five of them to convince him to leave for a few hours to clear his mind and have a proper lunch. Ben and Bev decide to stay with Eddie, leaving Mike and Bill to take Richie to get lunch at the bar.

As they come back, the sky starts falling down, so when they arrive back to the hospital, they all are soaking wet. Richie feels a little less tired, but he also wants to get back to Eddie's room. Once he gets there, he freezes, heart dropping to his stomach.

A woman, thick and blonde, who is the spitting image of Eddie's deceased mum, is shouting at Ben and Beverly.

"I'm sorry but who is this Sonia Kaspbrak lookalike and what is she doing here?" Richie exclaims.

"Richie...this is Myra, Eddie's wife," Bev says and looks at him with sad yet warning eyes.

And *oh*. That's who *she* is. Richie tries not to show his discomfort at her presence, but he can't help but feel his skin prickling the longer she looks at him with disgust. He knows, somewhere in the back of his mind, that he's selfish; she is Eddie's wife, after all, but that doesn't stop him from wanting her thrown out of the hospital. Of Derry. *Maybe off the planet*, Richie's subconscious traitorously supplies.

"What did y'all freaks did to my husband?" Myra screams, going into hysterics. "I knew it, I knew that something bad would happen to him. This is all your fault! He wouldn't leave on his own, you're a bad influence! You kidnapped him for an entire month!"

Well that's a huge load of nonsense, Richie thinks to himself before conjuring up a witty retort.

"I'm sorry, Jabba the Hutt, but you *do* know that your husband is 40 years old, right?" Richie says.

"Eddie would *never* leave me like that," Myra insists.

"That's what you think," Richie mutters to himself, but apparently not as low as he should have because Ben throws him a warning look.

"How did you know he was here, anyway?" Ben asks, and he genuinely seems curious about it.

"Well, that's obvious. I put a tracker on his phone and the last place he used it was in this hell site, so naturally I came here and I found out that you've been hiding him away from me in this fucking hospital."

"Oh, that's right, yeah, that was what we're doing, getting him as far away as possible from you," Richie replies, pleased with himself, giving her an only halfway sarcastic smile.

"That's it. I'm leaving and I'm taking him home with me."

"Ma'am, you do realize he's still in critical state, right?" Bill asks

"Yes and that's why I am taking him back to New York with me, where they will actually take care of him. But until then, none of you, especially not you... you," she says, pointing a pudgy finger at Richie, "are allowed to enter this room"

"What? You can't do that!" Richie screams.

"I can and I will. You really think I want my Eddie be around a bunch of fairies and weirdos and creeps like the lot of you?"

Richie wants to reply to that last comment of hers more than anything, but Myra bludgeoned his heart where it hurts most, leaving him speechless for once.. Beverly notices his state and reaches a hand up to comfort him, squeeze his shoulder. Richie decides that there's no point in arguing with Myra, just like there was no point in arguing with Eddie's mum back in the day. Even if he wanted to reply, there's nothing he could really say, so he just bites his cheeks until they are almost bleeding to refrain himself from insulting her.

Thing is that as promised, she does take him back home. When she calls the doctors and the nurses, the personnel let them know that because Eddie is unconscious and Myra is his wife, she is the one to make the calls. For Richie, this is a lost battle.

There's nothing they, or Richie, can do to stop Myra from moving him back to NYC. When Richie watches as Eddie is wheeled into the waiting ambulance, lightning strikes through the air and breaks the sky apart. The noise cracks apart Richie's heart and he feels it breaking because the thing is... he doesn't know if he'll ever see Eddie again.

It's been a month since he got back from Derry, and this time, unlike last time, he remembers everything. Every single thing. Which means he remembers Eddie and the way he used and still makes him feel. He doesn't know why, unlike the last time, he didn't forget a thing. He guesses it must have to do with the fact that It's death broke the Derry curse, but Richie would be lying if he said he didn't miss the Losers, especially Eddie, more than ever.. He misses talking to him in the way they did as kids. He misses their stupid, silly banters. He misses the way Eddie would annoy the shit out of him just to capture his attention (and the other way around). But he misses the way Eddie would make him smile, even when he was having the worst of days. And it hurts. Having a heartbreak always does, but it hurts especially so this time around because he never got to tell (conscious) Eddie how he feels about him. He could, it's true, but he won't. Not when Eddie is in NYC and not when Eddie is married. But the thing is, why? Why is he married? Why did he become the husband of someone who mistreats him and bullies him? Of someone who tricks him into thinking he is sick and someone who probably doesn't know how lucky she is to have someone as amazing as Eddie in her life?

It's the rejection Richie knows he'll get from Eddie that is the biggest barrier to telling him. He knows Eddie will feel disgusted by his confession, so he decides that the best thing to do is to keep his "dirty little secret" to himself. But this dirty little secret is eating him alive, rotting him from his inside, making him feel nauseous. Richie wakes up most nights drenched in a cold sweat and crying because of dreams more horrifying than anything It conjured up. In his dreams, no, nightmares, Eddie hurled homophobic slurs at him, called him gross, all because he told Eddie that he loved him.

Of course, he dreams about Pennywise's murder of Eddie, waking up with a start and screaming, with tears streaming down his face. His

mind replays the moment where It's claw pierced Eddie's chest and his blood covered Richie. He dreams that his body is covered in Eddie's blood, staining his skin. He brings the pain and horror of the dreams into the present. He doesn't get why this is happening to him. Pennywise is dead, so why are these nightmares chasing him like they are doing? Are they related to the fucking clown or is he just fucked up? He doesn't have an answer, but he does know that these thoughts are also eating him alive.

Some nights, though, just a few ones, he dreams that he and Eddie have a happy life. Those ones leave him warm and cozy and safe-feeling when he wakes up. . In those dreams he feels like home and he feels like he's 13 again. But that's what they are: dreams, just pieces of his imagination that won't ever come true.

Richie sighs and rubs his tear-filled eyes; he wouldn't love himself either if he was Eddie.

The sun is setting over the horizon, dying the city orange, when he receives a call from Mike. He's surprised to see Mike's name on the screen, but picks up the phone anyways. Mike's greeting to him is warm.

"Mikey, hi!"

"What's up, Richie?" Mike asks.

"I'm doing good, I'm doing good...how are you?" He genuinely wants to know. It's been a while since they talked.

"I'm really happy, actually. Finally got out of Derry, moved to New Jersey."

"That's wonderful. I'm glad to hear that."

"Thanks, man. Richie, I was wondering...did you got the letter?"

"What letter?" He asks in confusion.

"Oh, you'll know as soon as you see it. Just check your pile of letters, it's there."

And Richie is confused because who the hell sends letters in 2019?

"Okay, I'll read it," he promises, nonetheless.

"Perfect. See you, Richie."

Richie goes to check his correspondence as soon as he hangs. It's all bills and business letters, until he finds it. His name is handwritten on the envelope, and he knows who sent it; he'd know that handwriting anywhere. It belonged to Stan. Before he realizes it, tears start burning his eyes, and then it hits him how much he misses his friend, how much he misses Stan and the relationship he had with him. They were always the total opposite: Stan was mature, so fucking smart, serious and sometimes even a buzzkill... but he was also so funny. Not funny like Richie, but funny in the way only a few people know how to appreciate. He was witty and sarcastic from time to time, but it was his reactions that were the best. He made the best speeches and he was always there for them and showed he cared with these small gestures that Richie would make fun of but secretly love. And Stan always had his back, Stan was truly one of his best friends, and now he realizes how much he misses him and how much he wished he was there with them, defeating Pennywise.

As soon as he starts reading the letter, he starts crying. He feels so stupid for having called Stan coward and weak when he was, in fact, the total opposite.

Dear losers,

I know what this must seem like, but this is not a suicide note. You're probably wondering why I did what I did. It's because I knew I was too scared to go back. And if we weren't together, if all of us alive weren't united, I knew we'd all die so, I made the only logical move. I took myself off the board. Did it work?

Richie has to stop for a moment because it's all too much. Fucking Stan, why did he doubt his own strength? He tears up a little bit and orders himself not to lose his chill. He breathes out and waits a few seconds before continuing, a tear rolling down his cheek.

"Well, if you're reading this, you know the answer. I lived my whole life

afraid: afraid of what would come next, afraid of what I might leave behind. Don't. Be who you want to be. Be proud. And if you find someone worth holding onto, never ever let them go."

And now Richie starts properly sobbing because he knows. Stan, in this one letter, confirms what Richie has suspected all along: that he *knew*. . He knew, Stan always knew. Of course he is saying this because everyone and each of them has something they feel they have to hide, but Richie also knows that Stan would want him to be proud of this. He would want Richie to be proud of who he loves and who he is. And for the first time in forever, and especially for the first time ever since he heard that ugly tune Pennywise sang to him, he feels like maybe his dirty little secret isn't so dirty after all. It's just a secret.

"Follow your own path, wherever that takes you. Think of this letter as a promise, a promise I'm asking you to make. To me, to each other: an oath. See, the thing about being a loser is you don't have anything to lose. So be true, be brave, stand, believe, and don't ever forget, we're losers and we always will be."

It takes Richie several minutes to recompose himself. It's difficult to do so when it's all too much and everything is just so overwhelming. He wishes Stan knew how wise he was. He always showed it, and the speech he gave in his Bar Mitzvah and this letter are the living proof of it. But Richie also wishes more than anything that Stan knew how loved and missed he was, how all of the Losers loved and cared about him.

A week has gone by since he read Stan's letter, and he only had a nightmare about Eddie dying once. The other nights were a blessing; his dreams were filled with scenes of the old Losers days, with just the seven of them against the world. He feels better, and he doesn't feel as sad as before, even though he misses Eddie and the rest of his friends like fucking hell.

So when he gets an email from Beverly, Richie is really fucking surprised. And okay, the email is from Ben as well, and it's clear that the other Losers received the same one. It's an invitation to a four-day trip on their yacht, ending with their wedding ceremony that weekend. . A gigantic smile spreads across Richie's face; Ben and

Beverly, finally getting married. He scrolls through the replies, and his heart races when he sees that Eddie has confirmed his attendance. With shaking hands and a strange feeling in his stomach he can't name, he writes that he is going, too, and then he hits the "send" button.

It's done. In two weeks, he is going to see Eddie again.

On Thursday, Richie arrives at the harbor and finds himself on Ben's yacht. The sun is warm and bright and shines above the sky, spreading its long rays of light across the crystalline water, making it glisten. Richie takes note of the strange, jumbled feelings that reside deep in his gut. He can't decide which feeling is stronger; the happiness that comes from the anticipation of seeing his childhood friends without any worries or the presence of that fucking clown, or the weakness that comes from knowing that when he sees Eddie, he will lose all semblance of self-control. Or maybe it's the nervousness; God knows that the anxiety rising in his chest is going to make it impossible to face the present situation.

He walks over the wood deck, the echo of his footsteps mixing up with the song of the seagulls and the sound of waves dancing softly. Bill is already there with someone he assumes it's his wife, and, of course, Bev and Ben are there, too. Bev looks fucking stunning, the most notable thing being that there are no longer traces of fear on her face, and he's not gonna lie, Ben looks proper stunning as well. Ben smiles at him and rushes to hug him, holding him tightly in those strong arms, and Richie can't help but hug him back, laughing softly.

"We're so glad you could make it, Richie," Ben says, and Richie responds with a few pats to Ben's back.

When Eddie arrives thirty minutes later, Richie swears he feels time slowing down just so he can take in the sight of Eddie climbing up the steps, backlit by the rays of the sun and properly sear it into his mind. He feels his heartbeat quicken like it did the first time he saw Eddie in Derry after 27 years, so hard that he feels his chest vibrate with the rapid, forceful beats. Eddie has clearly recovered the weight he lost in the hospital, and for the first time (at least after 27 years), he doesn't have any bags under his eyes.

Eddie waves at all of the Losers as he approaches them, going first to Billy and his wife, then Ben and Beverly, and finally coming to him. Richie senses the electricity in the air when Eddie hugs him, feels it invade all of his neurons, and because he is Richie and doesn't know what else to do when he is nervous as hell, he decides the best thing he can do is crack a joke.

"Jesus, man, you look like shit," he says, tracing his pointer finger across the scar on his cheek, the one Bowers gave him. He wants to let his finger linger on the deepest edge of it, but realizes how fucking weird it was for him to do this to Eddie in front of people and jerks his hand away. He shoves the offending hand in his pocket, grinning nervously to ease the tension, kick the elephant in the room out.

"Fuck you, dipshit," Eddie jokes back, smiling that million-watt, wide-toothed smile Richie loved so much.

"I'm just kidding, Eds. I'm happy you're okay. Gave us a proper scare out there."

"Thanks, man."

Richie nods. He's not sure what else he can do in this situation without royally fucking up.

Mike arrives last, but he doesn't arrive alone. It seems that getting out of Derry helped him not only to leave behind a life of torments all of them wanted to leave, but also permitted him to find someone in his life. Richie wonders if he will ever find someone, too. He doubts it though, because he doesn't see himself falling in love with someone when he has been head over heels in love with Eddie, his best friend in the whole world, for well over 27 years.

After two days, in relatively close proximity to Eddie, all Richie has managed to do is avoid Richie like the plague. *But, his mind supplies, it's not your fault. Don't want to fight an impossible battle, now, do you?* Richie's helplessly in love mind and soul don't want to get hurt; the best option in this kind of fruitless situation is to just give up. Avoid. Do what he's always done. *Eddie's married, now. Things would be different if he wasn't, but he is. And that means you have to avoid*

entertaining any kind of relationship with him, the rational side of his brain told him. But the emotional side, all sappy and sentimental, screams at him. *Take a chance! What's left to lose?* The rational side, as always, climbs in and reminds him of the rejection he'd receive from Eddie. Rejection that would be too impossible to overcome. And so there Richie was, caught in the middle of a skirmish between his brain and his heart. It was impossible to know which side to feed into.

That night, when Richie is sitting alone on one of the deck couches, Ben comes over to sit next to him.

"Are you enjoying yourself?"

"Yup. Thanks for the invitation, man."

"Of course," Ben smiles. "Richie, there's this thing I have been wanting to ask you, so, may I?"

"Well, you're gonna ask anyways, aren't you?" Richie stares at him knowingly, making Ben chuckle.

"You're not wrong."

"Then go ahead, shoot."

"You and Eddie..."

"What about me and Eddie?" Richie asks, feeling the beat of his heart rise up its speed.

"It's just that...Richie, listen, I know the way you feel about him."

"What do you mean the way I feel about him?"

"C'mon, buddy, I can tell that you're in love with him."

Richie sighs and slides his fingers under his glasses so he can rub his eyes.

"Am I really that fucking obvious?"

"Yes."

"Fuck."

"But so was I, and still am with Bev, Richie. We're all obvious when we are in love."

"Right," Richie huffs. "And you don't mind"

"I don't mind what?" Ben asks.

"You know... the fact that I'm gay?"

"Why would I? Trust me when I say that none of us care about the fact that you're into men."

"The rest know, then."

"I'm sure they do, yeah. But like I said, we don't care if you're into women or men or whatever so long as you're happy."

Richie sighs.

"Which leads me to the following question..." Ben says, looking at him intently. "Are you going to keep ignoring him or are you going to do something about it?"

"What can I do, Ben? He's already fucking married. I missed my chance," Richie whines.

Ben looks at him, dead silent for a second, a silence that makes Richie wonder if he is hiding something.

"Bev was married, too. And look at us now."

"Yeah but Bev was married to an abusive asshole who was just like his father."

"And Richie married an abusive asshole who is just like his mother," Ben shoots back, grinning. He looks a little too pleased with his retort.

Touché, Richie thinks to himself.

"Fuck you, Ben, do you always have to be such a smart ass?" Richie asks, making Ben laugh aloud.

"I'm just saying, man. You've got to take a chance."

Richie never believed that magical, mystical things like second chances existed. But now, even after 27 years, his heart goes crazy every damn time he sees Eddie. And maybe, just fucking *maybe*, the world is deciding to give him a desperately-needed second chance.

So maybe, *just* maybe, Richie's brain cautiously supplies, Ben is right about this.

The next day at the wedding, Richie finds that he's kept avoiding Eddie despite doing his best to run into the other man. He manages to do his best, at least until they all go to the ceremony and sees him standing there, dressed up in his tuxedo, talking to Bill. Eddie throws a glance at him and Richie manages to break the eye contact almost instantly. Damn nerves.

The music starts up and Richie snaps out of his daze; he turns his head and sees Beverly, walking up the aisle in that white dress and braided updo. She looks fucking beautiful today. Ben can't stop smiling and Richie can't either because he genuinely feels happy for his friends today. Billy smiles at them too. Richie doesn't even know what happened there, nor does he want to, but he can tell that Billy's happiness is genuine. Richie steals a glance at Mike, who's grinning like crazy as well, but then his eyes fall on Eddie. Eddie, like him, isn't really staring at the others, but at *him*. Richie's stomach does a backflip as he avoids his gaze again. Richie mentally kicks himself for acting like a five year old with a crush, because that's the shit way he's acting. Has been acting like for four days now.

Richie would be lying if he said he didn't tear up when both Ben and Bev read their vows. Ben read the poem he wrote for her 27 years ago, the poem that started everything.

Your hair is winter fire, January embers, my heart burns there, too.

He has to admit that Ben really has a way with words, and deep

inside, Richie wishes that he could have that talent as well. Sure, his talent is his trashmouth, but he only knows how to use his words to be funny, unlike Ben who can use them to create this beautiful image of Bev.

Beverly says her vows after Ben. They are not a poem, but they still make tears well up in Richie's eyes.

The music blasts, loud, and Richie allows himself to get lost in dances, not giving a shit if people will stare at him or not. Maybe that's because he's a little tipsy, or maybe it's because Bowers is locked up and nobody can hunt him down or terrorize him again like when he was 13. He dances next to Rita, a friend from sophomore year, and her boyfriend Jake. Somewhere, deep inside, he wishes he was dancing next to the Losers. But then again, they haven't really talked since Bill moved away from Derry three years ago. It was only a month after they defeated It. And that makes him feel nostalgic for that time in the clubhouse, on the day they all promised they would still be friends, not long after they formed their group. After that first year, they did reunite. Not as often as before, but they did. Sometimes they were four or five, sometimes even six, but it was never the seven of them. Now, the only one he really talks to, the only one who's really his friend, is Stan. Eddie has since fallen out of his life. They don't hang out or even fucking talk anymore, which is only made more strange by the fact that Stan and Eddie remained friends. And it sucks. Sometimes he wishes things could last forever, but then reality gives him a wake-up call and he realizes nothing does. And the Losers certainly fucking didn't.

He pushes away these thoughts to continue moving to the rhythm of the music, dancing and screaming to "Smells Like Teen Spirit" by Nirvana.

And that's when he sees him: Eddie Kaspbrack. He glances him entering the saloon through the main door with Stan by his side. They are laughing and Richie feels kind of warm because Eddie looks happy with that beautiful smile of his spread on his face. But it also feels bittersweet because he wishes Eddie was laughing with him, too. He wishes it was him the one who is making him laugh like he did in the old days. However, it comes as a surprise seeing him there because even though Eddie is already 16 years old, his idiot mother still babies him as much as she did before. And also because Eddie never really liked crowded places, let alone in

closed rooms where, according to him, germs just flooded up in the air.

But there he is, entering the party, taller than he was three years ago. He is still small or shorter than him, at least, but he has grown up a bit, and his hair has grown as well, little curls falling onto his forehead. Stan waves his hand at them when he sees him, and Richie gets nervous because he's sure the two of them will approach him.

"Richie!" Stan says smiling.

"Stan. Hi, Eds," he says at Eddie, pushing up his glasses.

"Hi, Richie," Eddie smiles. And there it is, the smile Richie has always loved.

"Hi." He says again.

"Well, see ya' later," Stan grins before heading to the bar, with Eddie following his steps.

Richie decides not to think about it and continues dancing, this time on his own because he doesn't know where the fuck Rita and Jake went to.

"Richie, right?" He hears someone saying. So he turns around only to freeze. It's Bowers' cousin.

You, assholes, didn't tell me your town was full of fairies.

He doesn't answer. Not right away at least. He just stares at him, blinking, unsure of what he should do.

"Uhm, yeah?"

"Listen, uhm, this may be weird to you but I just saw you here and I realized that I never got to apologize for the way I treated you three years ago, that afternoon we were playing Street Fighter in the Arcade. I know there's no excuse for what I did," he says, all nervous as he scratches his nape with his hand. "I just was so terrified of my cousin and his friends. So terrified. So when I saw them there I just got shitless scared and did what I did and I fucked up so bad because I was having a good time playing with you. I really am sorry." He says.

Richie feels surprise wash over him because he really does sound like if he was sorry. So he smiles.

"It's okay, I was terrified of Bowers and his minions, too."

The guy laughs, and Richie can't help but noticing his beauty. He's the complete opposite from Eddie: tall, blonde hair, well built.

"I'm Marcus, by the way," the other boy says, introducing himself, stretching out his hand.

"Marcus, nice to meet you," Richie answers, and when he grabs his hand he notices its rough skin. Its calluses. Eddie's hands were different, too; they were soft. "So, what are you doing here in Derry? I mean, your cousin is..."

"In a mental house? Yeah, I know. Fucking horrible what he did. If you ask me, his dad was as terrifying as he was. But no, I didn't come because of him. My dad has a client here and he asked me to join him so here I am, staying here for the weekend."

Richie nods.

He can't remember exactly how they ended up in the backyard, sat on a bench, talking and laughing, just the two of them. It's dark and almost everybody has gone home and at least there's no one in the backyard to annoy them or to see. So Marcus kisses Richie, and Richie kisses him back. It's just a small kiss, but when they break apart, both of them are smiling. Richie even feels a tinge of blush on his cheeks.

"Listen, Richie, wanna go somewhere else? You know, somewhere more private," Marcus asks, to which Richie nods, his heart almost pounding out of his chest. "Okay so, let's go inside to grab our things and then we'll leave, yeah?"

"Yeah, sure."

When Richie enters the dancing room again, he realizes Eddie and Stan haven't left yet. Eddie, however, is not dancing like the last time he saw him before; Eddie is assumedly drunk, doing his best to stand still. Stan is trying to help him, but Eddie laughs as he wraps his neck with one of his arms, trying to support his weight on him. Stan sees him and walks

towards him, with Eddie still hanging around him.

"What the fuck? How much did he drink?" Richie asks.

"I don't know, man, he brought his own flask."

"What? Where did he even got one of those from?"

"It belonged to my dad, but don't tell my mum, she will kill me," Eddie giggles.

"How much did you drink, Eddie?" Richie asks.

"Uhm..." Eddie says, contemplating his words. "The whole thing."

"Jesus, Stan, he never drinks, how did you even let him?"

"Stan the man." Eddie slurs. "Beep, beep, Richie."

Eddie only looks at him for a few seconds before laughing.

"Oh, great, he's fucking wasted."

"Richie, buddy, I seriously need help. I promised my parents that I was going to be home by 12, but I can't leave Eddie like this."

"So what do you want me to do? Do you want me to get Eddie home?"

"If you could do that favor for me, I would really, really appreciate it."

Fuck. Fucking Stan.

"Please?" Stan smiles at him, and Richie sighs, finding himself unable to say no to him. Or to Eddie. Or whoever.

"Okay, I'll take him home."

"Thanks so much, Richie. Seriously."

"Yeah whatever," Richie replies, pretending he doesn't care, even though he knows Stan already knows he does.

Stan waves goodbye and for a minute that seems to last forever in Richie's

mind, both him and Eddie stay quiet, not knowing what to say. It feels so strange not being able to speak to him when back in the day they could literally talk and argue about the most random things ever.

"Okay so... I'll go and let Marcus know that I'll drive you home so, wait me a second."

"Marcus?" Eddie rises an eyebrow.

"Yeah, Ma-" Richie stops himself. "Never mind. Just stay here and wait for me."

"Not going anywhere," Eddie says, sitting on the bench.

Richie nods. It takes literally two minutes for him to find Marcus and explain to him what happened. When he tells him that he would love to leave with him but he really needs to take Eddie safe back home, Mike understands and says that they can meet any other day of the week before he leaves, which Richie agrees to with a smile on his face.

They don't really talk on their way back home. It feels strange when back in the day, both of them were capable of filling any possible silence with their words.

When they arrive, they enter the house in silence and Richie decides the best thing to do is to make sure Eddie makes it to his bed alive.

When he gets into his room, a rush of nostalgia invades him. They used to spend so many afternoons there, back when problems didn't seem to exist and Pennywise wasn't a thing.

"How did you even manage to convince your mum to go to the party?"

"She doesn't know I even went," Eddie responds.

"What do you mean she doesn't know?"

"I may or may have not put a sleeping pill on her drink." Eddie giggles mischievously at his own plan.

"You did what? Eddie, if she finds out she will literally kill you."

"She won't. Can I see your glasses?"

"What?"

"Your glasses, I wanna try on your glasses," Eddie smiles, stretching out his hand,

"What do you want to try my glasses on for?" Richie replies, smiling, slapping his hand away.

"C'mon, Richie!" He leans over, invading his personal space, and manages to take Richie's glasses away from his face.

"Eds, give me those back" he whines, but Eddie stops pulling out his free arm, placing his hand over his chest. Richie prays that Eddie doesn't notice the way his heart is beating faster and faster now that they're so close to each other. And the thing is, he knows he could take his glasses back if he wanted to, he knows that he is stronger so Eddie's hand is not really stopping him at all, but the boy looks like he is having fun so he just stares at the way Eddie tries on his own glasses.

"Wow, you can't see shit," Eddie giggles.

"Yeah, shit face, that is why I wear them," Richie replies, biting his inner cheek to restrain himself from telling Eddie he looks so cute with his glasses on.

Eddie smiles before giving Richie his specs back, then unceremoniously drops onto the bed. Richie wants to sit at his feet, wants to stay all night there taking care of him and making sure he doesn't throw up or have a hangover in the morning, but he rapidly pushes those thoughts away because he knows it's impossible to do so.

They stay quiet for another second, and that second feels like forever. Why does Eddie keep making all of these moments last forever tonight?.

"Why don't you talk to me anymore?" Eddie asks, eyes closed, breaking up the silence.

"What?"

"You don't talk to me anymore."

"That's not true, Eddie," Richie denies, shaking his head even though Eddie's eyes are shut and he's quickly falling asleep.

"But it is. You talk to Stan but you don't talk to me anymore. Ever since Bill left this shitty town. Not like you used to, at least..." he replies with relative speed, considering his intoxicated state. "You don't even tease me like you did when we were thirteen."

Richie wishes he could answer, but he doesn't really know what to say.

"I just miss you, you know?" Eddie mumbles. "Miss the way it used to be between the two of us."

Richie's stomach does a backflip.

"I'm sorry, Eddie."

"It's okay. I'm not angry." He yawns, which makes Richie yawn as well. "Thanks for bringing me home safe, Richie. I love you."

Richie is thankful that Eddie didn't open his eyes at that moment because then he would have seen him blushing hotter and redder than ever.. He can feel the heat on his cheeks and he feels so overwhelmed all out of a sudden he just doesn't know exactly what to do to keep himself together. It's just the alcohol speaking, though, so he tells himself not to make a big deal out of it.

"I love you too, Eds," Richie whispers. But Eddie doesn't answer; he has already fallen asleep.

"I always did," he mutters, almost to himself.

Richie is standing against the rail, watching the way the moon reflects over the water and feeling the soft breeze against his face. Fucking posh wedding. Of course Beverly and Ben were going to get married in a fancy boat. Love is in the air. Everyone is happy, Beverly and Ben got their happy ending. Bill's there with his wife; Mike got himself a new girlfriend, and Eddie, despite being alone at the moment, is married. So yeah, he guesses, love is in the air for everyone but him. And it's fucking *unfair*, man, he should have his happy ending, too.

But it's been almost three months since they defeated Pennywise and he still can't get over Eddie. And this time it's so much worse because he remembers everything; all the laughs, all the tears, all the conversations, all the feelings coming back when they met after so, so many years... And Eddie is still sorrowfully married and he can't do anything about it. He can feel his eyes burning but he manages not to cry. He doesn't want to feel weaker than he already is.

"Hi," he suddenly hears, and he almost chokes on air because he knows that voice.

"Eds," Richie smiles weakly.

"So, what are you doing here all on your own? You're missing the party."

"You're missing the party, too, you know," Richie points out.

"Fair enough," Eddie grins at him, before looking at the ocean as well.

They stay silent for a while, in complete and utter silence. Richie can feel the tension building up in the air, and he's not sure what to do with it. He wants to run, he wants to jump off the boat and dive into the water, because fuck, he feels so ashamed. Not because of his sexuality, which he started embracing after Stan's letter, God bless his soul, but because he is still in love with his best friend, his best friend who happens to have a wife.

"Why have you been avoiding me?" Eddie asks. He doesn't seem angry, he just seems curious, almost a little bit disappointed.

And there it is, the question he wanted to avoid, the question that even after all this time he doesn't know how to answer.

"I haven't been avoiding you."

"Yeah, you have," the shorter man replies, sad smile on his face. And okay, he knows he is right. He has been avoiding him but just because he didn't know what else to do, he didn't know how to cope with all his feelings. "In fact, you're avoiding me now. You won't even look at me."

Richie breathes in and out and waits a moment before turning his head to stare at him. Eddie slightly raises his eyebrows, welcoming in Richie's gaze.

"Hi, there, Eds," is the only thing he manages to say.

"So, why have you been avoiding me?" He asks again.

"I-I don't know."

Richie stares down at his feet, avoiding his gaze again. He still doesn't know how to answer to that same question Eddie asked him 24 years ago when they were 16.

"I'm sorry," Richie offers. It's the only thing he can manage out of his mouth. Eddie, however, doesn't say anything: he just nods his head. They stay quiet for another moment, a moment that lasts way too long for Richie's taste. He always hated the silence and he usually has a salty comment to make that helps him cope with it, but this time he can't find one.

"I never thanked you," Eddie interrupts the silence once more.

"For what?"

"For staying by my side in the hospital." Eddie replies, in the most natural way. "I know you were there for weeks."

"Who told you?"

"Pretty much everyone. But they didn't have to. I already knew. I remembered you were there."

How, how did he remember when he was unconscious 99% of the time? He only saw him awakening for one second when he grabbed his hand and Eddie called out his name, but is it possible that he remembers that? Richie clenches his fists, nervously, trying to figure out what he should reply.

"It wasn't a big deal. I didn't stay much. Only until your wife arrived."

Which was like three weeks later, but sure, it wasn't a big deal

"She seemed pretty upset that I was there with you."

"Myra...yeah. I heard she wasn't precisely nice to you guys, especially to you." Eddie looks at him sympathetically. "I'm sorry."

When Eddie squeezes his shoulder, Richie feels his hand burning against his skin despite all the layers of clothes. He feels 13 all over again, blushing like a kid seeing their crush.

"It's okay," Richie lies because he doesn't want to tell Eddie that he wanted her to fuck off. "I guess she was scared. I would be scared too if your mum was in the hospital," He says and Eddie chuckles.

And there it goes: the joke to try to hide his pain. The joke to mask the fact that even though when he knows he has no right, he hates Myra for making him leave when Eddie was like that, for pushing him away from him.

"I got a divorce, you know?"

Richie's heart skip a beat. Or two. He doesn't even know how many beats his heart skipped. All he is sure about is that his body suddenly stopped working the way it is supposed to do.

"What?"

"I got a divorce."

"No, I heard that part. I mean, how? Why? When? Do the guys know already?"

"About two weeks ago."

Two weeks...two weeks...that's when they all got Stan's letter. It can't just be a coincidence. "And they do know, yes."

And now he realizes the reason Ben kept himself quiet when Richie said he didn't want to do anything because Eddie was married.

"So you told everyone but me."

"How could I, Richie? I couldn't find the moment since like you made

it clear you don't even seem to be in the same room with me."

"That's... you know that's not true," Richie shakes his head, sadly, because that was never his intention. The last thing he wanted to do was making him feel pushed away, but Eddie shrugs his shoulders. "What happened?"

"I guess I realized I didn't love her. I mean, I always kinda knew but so I wouldn't actually call it realizing but, you know, I finally had the courage to admit it to myself."

Richie's heart begins to race in anticipation.

"Oh," is the only thing he manages to say because his brain is still processing all the information. He wants to smile. He doesn't know if this means anything but at least he is happy Eddie got away from that toxic person.

"How...how did you realize?" Richie asks.

Eddie grins.

"Because she was horrible. And what happened in the hospital, well, that spoke levels to me. Why would I be married to someone who mistreats my friends like that? I didn't get to choose my mum, but I could choose who I was married to," Eddie explains, as Richie listens with more attention than ever. "But also, and most importantly, because during the time I was in the hospital, even after, and even till this day, I have this voice inside my head telling me something. A voice I think I heard while I was unconscious. I still don't know if it was real or not, but I can't stop thinking about it."

Richie freezes. He can feel his heart stick itself in his throat, his lungs forswear taking in any more oxygen. His body feels paralyzed.

"Wh-what, what voice?" Richie mumbles, and suddenly he feels like Billy because he can't even say a sentence with out muttering.

"When you guys got me out of the cave, I remember coming back to sense in your arms. And I could hear your voice."

Richie is rendered completely speechless. He can feel his heart

hammering violently against his chest, threatening to break his rib cage into splinters.

He feels nauseous and for a moment he thinks he may throw up but then he remembers Stan's letter. *"Be who you want to be. Be proud. And if you find someone worth holding onto, never ever let them go."* And Eddie is worth holding onto, he always was and he always will be.

"I could hear you saying that you... that you loved me, and that I was your first love. So I was wondering if I only imagined it all or if it re-"

Richie decides he doesn't have to speak at all. He just surges forward, interrupting Eddie mid-sentence, and kissing him. He knows this is it, he knows this is the moment where he will know if he fucked it up or if Eddie feels the same way he does. He is about to lean backwards when Eddie kisses him back, cradling his jaw tenderly. And suddenly, fireworks explode in Richie's belly. Because *oh my God*, after 27 years, he is kissing Eddie, the love of his life. And he recreated this kiss in a thousand different scenarios in a thousand different ways, but in none of them, the kiss was as good as the one he was sharing with Eddie right now. So they continue to kiss, tenderly, lips sweetly brushing against each other.

They only stop when they can hear the sound of steps coming in, and Richie swears he's going to kill whoever just interrupted their moment.

It's Bill. Freaking fucking fantastic. He shoots him a death stare, and Billy throws an apologetic stare in return, but talks nonetheless.

"Ehm, so they request all of us because they want to take a picture of the whole group together so... yeah, we have to be there in like, two minutes."

When they go back to the room where the party is taking place, Ben raises an eyebrow at him and smirks, and Richie has to pretend he doesn't know why Ben is looking at him like that, but it seems he isn't the only one who knows because Bev whistles at him and giggles.

They take all the pictures, as promised, and when they start dancing again, Richie finds himself doing something never thought he would

be capable of doing. He kisses Eddie. In front of everyone. And Eddie, far away from seeming angry, smiles into the kiss.

"Fucking finally," Richie hears Ben tell Bev. Richie flips them off in response.

When the party dwindled down, everyone heads back to their rooms. Eddie's was on the way to Richie's, so the pair walk together down the hallway, hand in hand.

They reach Eddie's room, and Richie is about to kiss him goodbye when Eddie interrupts him.

"Stay with me tonight?" Eddie asks, his voice trembling.

"Yes. Yes, of course, Eds. I'll stay with you," he replies faster than he is used to, and he doesn't even know if the words came out right because he felt his tongue getting stuck in his mouth, but apparently Eddie understood because he spreads a smile on his face and nods shyly.

So Eddie opens the door of his room and Richie follows him inside. As soon as they close the door, Richie finds himself wanting to do what he did first when he met Eddie this weekend, but this time without feeling embarrassed.

He lifts up his hand, and very slowly he brushes his fingertip over Eddie's cheek scar.

"Does it hurt?" Eddie answers by shaking his head no. Richie nods and realizes then that Eddie is standing on his toes to press their lips together once again. Richie surrenders to it, melting into Eddie's lips and relishing in the electricity running through his body.

He walks Eddie backwards until his legs bump the bed, and then the kiss intensifies; their tongues grow more heated, exploring the inside of each other's mouths. Richie decides he wants to explore all of Eddie. He grabs him by the waist to pull him in closer, and Eddie responds by wrapping his arms around his neck.

Richie is about to make him lie on the bed when Eddie interrupts the kiss.

"Richie, wait-" he says and Richie feels scared for a moment because he doesn't know if he overstepped a boundary. "Uhm, you should know that I- well, I've never been with anyone." He mutters, staring down at his feet.

"Not even with My-?" He wants to know.

"With Myra?" He chuckles. "No, especially not with her"

"That's okay, Eds. We don't have to do anything if you don't want to," he reassures him because the only thing he wants is for Eddie to feel comfortable.

"No, no! I do want to, I really do. It is just that...well, I don't want to disappoint you," Eddie sighs, refusing to meet Richie's eyes.

"Hey," Richie says lifting up Eddie's face by the chin so he can look into his eyes. "You could never disappoint me, Eds."

He doesn't know exactly who moves first, but as soon as he says this, they are both all over each other again, kissing with more eagerness and desperation than before. The way Richie senses it, they kiss each other as if they want to make for all the years they lost *not* doing this.

Things go slower when they start undressing each other, and Richie finds himself more fucking nervous than ever, his trembling hands unbuttoning Eddie's shirt. And then he realizes, he didn't get to see him like this, *shirtless*, because Eddie would always have on his t-shirt on saying that he didn't want to get skin cancer, so this is the first time he gets to witness the scar of Pennywise's claw on his chest.

"It's ugly, isn't it?" Eddie sadly smiles, but Richie shakes his head furiously.

"No, not even one bit, Eddie. For me, it's just another example of how brave you are. You saved me that night, you know, right?" Richie says and thinks he might as well melt right then and there because now? Eddie is blushing and he can't recall the last time he made him blush.

"Fuck, just... just kiss me, Richie."

Richie obliges, because he doesn't want to stop kissing him, but he also wants Eddie to feel good, so instead of going for the other man's mouth, he leans in to kiss the spot behind his ear before taking his lips down Eddie's neck. When he feels Eddie shiver against him, he crashes his mouth against Eddie's again, this time with more strength behind his kiss. Eddie tangles his arms behind his neck and sucks in his lower lip, and Richie can't help but feel weak in the knees, electricity running all throughout his body. Richie's first reaction is to tangle his fingers in Eddie's hair to pull him in closer, feeling his hip bones against his thighs. He moves his hands south so that he grabs Eddie by the waist, thumbs brushing his hip bones, making him tremble. Richie decides that having Eddie in his arms is one of the best feelings in the world.

Eddie feels fucking *stiff* against him and he can feel his hard cock pulsing against his leg despite the layers of clothes between them.

They finish up in bed, hands running against each other's skin, messy kisses and caresses, getting rid of their pants and underwear. Richie takes his time to prepare Eddie. He presses his lips against the scar on his chest and lets himself go lower, leaving a trail of wet kisses, until his mouth is on his thighs, where he nibbles softly on the even softer skin. Eddie might bruise here from the soft bites, which entices Richie to continue. And then, after some teasing that leaves Richie begging, he takes him down.

"Oh, God," Eddie moans, almost instantly.

Eddie's noises push Richie to go forward. He can feel him growing harder in his mouth and all he wants is for Eddie to feel as much pleasure as possible. Eddie whines again, which makes Richie get harder himself.

"Uhm, Eddie, do you have? You know..." he asks, pulling his mouth away from Eddie's cock.

"Eh... yes I do." Eddie blushes, yet again.

Richie lifts up his eyebrows, surprised because he didn't quite expect that answer. He thought he was going to have to rush into his room to grab both the lube and condoms.

"Really?"

"Yeah. I brought them, you know, just in case this happened."

"Wait, so did you expect us to do this?" he smiles, which makes Eddie blush even harder, his whole face turning bright red.

"Maybe..." Eddie replies with a squeak.

Richie feels his pupils go wide, turning his eyes almost black and kisses him once more, making Eddie taste his own flavor.

"Where are they?" Richie asks between kisses.

"Drawer," Eddie points at the desk table.

As soon as Richie grabs the lube and condoms and returns to the bed, he finds himself back at it again, and this time when he pins Eddie down to the mattress by the hips while he kisses Eddie's abdomen and thighs, he feels Eddie's whole body react to the attention. Richie licks a fat stripe down his cock before getting his fingers covered in lube so that he can start opening him up, slowly, mouth still working on his dick, ripping out little whimpers out of Eddie that push him to go further.

Once that Eddie nearly screams that he is ready, Richie climbs up and kisses the corner of his mouth.

"Are you sure?"

Eddie nods, eagerly.

"Okay," he replies. He breathes in and then he slowly pushes his cockinside him. He stays quiet for a second so Eddie can get used to the feeling, and when he can hear him whimper, Richie starts moving his hips, rocking them gently against the other man. Eddie pushes his head back against the mattress and Richie seizes that opportunity to bite softly at the juncture between his shoulder and his neck. He only moves his hips faster when he hears Eddie begging for it. Richie's brain short circuits when he realizes that this is actually happening, that he is really, truly making love to Eddie. As they get lost in each other's bodies, both men feel nebulas of nearly-unbearable pleasure

swelling throughout their whole bodies. Richie doesn't know how to cope with the sensation that starts building up in his belly, so he kisses Eddie, their lips hungrily battling in a messy dance, both of them gasping and breathing into each other's mouths. It is when Eddie scratches his back, raking his nails so deep that Richie's skin burns upon exposure to the air, that he can't take it anymore. He manages to slip his hand in between their bellies, taking Eddie's cock in his hand, and moves his fist up and down slowly, almost teasingly, very slowly almost in a teasing way, because he wants to prolong this experience for as long as possible.

"Richie-" Eddie cries out.

"Yeah?" Richie asks between kisses.

"Please..."

"What do you want?"

"You know what I want, dipshit," he complains, and Richie can't help but laugh before moving his hand faster, but not to the speed he knows Eddie wants it. "Like this?"

"Faster, fuck," Eddie begs, and Richie obliges.

"Are you about to come?" The other one doesn't reply because he is biting his lips. Richie presses his lips against Eddie's chin and nibbles softly its skin.

"Come for me, Eds," Richie rasps against the shell of Eddie's ear. "C'mon, baby, just come," he whispers, brushing his thumb over the head of his cock. The pet name doesn't register in Richie's head until the words pass through his lips, but Eddie seems to have liked it because he grunts and pushes up his head to kiss him. Richie smiles against his mouth and continues thumbing at Eddie's dick so he can drive him over the edge, hoping that his orgasm will hit his own body as well. *Maybe at the same time as Eddie's*, Richie's subconscious supplies teasingly. Suddenly, they both hit that high point, where it feels like they can't experience anything more pleasurable than this, and Richie feels like he'll pass out at any moment. The feeling is so intense and overwhelming that Richie can't blame himself for feeling

like this. The wire in Eddie's body must have snapped, because Richie feels Eddie's coming between their bodies. Richie's orgasm almost immediately follows Eddie's, and it makes him see stars. He releases a low, guttural grunt that he drowns in Eddie's mouth with a sloppy, wet kiss. He doesn't remember ever coming so hard and for so long.

Richie lets himself collapse over Eddie's body before pulling himself out and getting rid of the condom. He stands up, throws it in the bin, and then goes back to the bed and lies on his side so he can stare at him. His breaths are still ragged, uneven.

"Hey..." he says.

"I feel sticky. I'm sorry for making such a mess," Eddie says apologetically, but Richie can't really understand what he is making amends for.

"Don't be sorry, I like it messy." Richie grins widely, making Eddie smile in a similar way.

"Really?" Eddie scoffs sarcastically.

Richie idly traces his fingertips over Eddie's still-come covered belly before sticking them in his mouth and sucking the come off.

"Really."

"Jesus, Richie! Why did you do that?" Eddie asks, trying his best not to laugh. Richie shrugs his shoulders. "You're fucking gross, did you know that?"

Richie knows that Eddie doesn't truly mean that because the other man is smiling at him, forming little crinkles around his eyes. Richie can't help but snort, which draws a laugh from Eddie.

"We should get ourselves clean," Eddie sighs. "I stink like come and latex."

They take their sweet time in the shower, and for the first time all night, Richie is without his glasses, so he can't see Eddie at all. But that doesn't stop him from melting at how sweet Eddie is with him. He may see him blurry, especially under the water, but he can feel

his soft caresses and kisses over his shoulders. They stay there, giggling and kissing each other, until the water turns cold and they decide it is time to go back to bed.

Eddie puts his pijamas on before slipping under the covers, which doesn't surprise Richie at all because as far as he can remember he always slept with clothes on to avoid catching a cold. Richie puts his briefs back on and slides in with Eddie, hugging him from behind.

"Is it okay like this?" he asks, in a whisper against his ear.

Eddie nods and places his hand over Richie's, tracing his thumb over it.

Richie sleeps peacefully all night.

The next morning, he is awakened by a kiss on the forehead from Eddie.

"Richie..." he hears. "Richie..."

"Yes?"

"I was just thinking...yesterday you went down on me, but I didn't get to return the favor."

Richie smiles and opens his eyes to gaze at Eddie even though he can't see properly without his glasses on.

"That's okay, Eds. You don't have to go down on me just because I did it for you."

"But I want to, Richie, I want to go down on you."

"Well, if you want to, I'd love-" he doesn't even get to finish the sentence because Eddie gets at it really fast. And truth be told, he never thought that having Eddie's mouth on him would ever feel so good. Did he think about it and how much he would love it? A million times yes, but none of those fantasies even compared to the way he feels right now. Eddie may be insecure and a little clumsy, but Richie doesn't care, it still feels so fucking amazing he could die. And then Richie finds himself coming for a second time in a span of

less than twelve hours, and he has to ask himself if he's dreaming because these moments with Eddie feel too good to be true. When it finally sinks in that all of this, that him making love to Eddie was actually real, Richie's heart can't help but swell with happiness.

The hours of sunset were always Richie's favorite part of the day. He loved the way the sun hid behind the horizon, turning everything he touches orange, the way you just can smell that time of the day in the air.

It's their last afternoon there, they are heading back home and he is sitting on the floor against the rail, legs hanging over the edge, just thinking about life and the way lots of things have changed ever since they got that call from Mike. Richie would have never thought, though, that his love for Eddie would actually be returned, and, what's more, consummated, so he knows there's still a lot of information left to process.

Eddie sits next to him and offers him a beer Richie gladly accepts. What Eddie says next, he doesn't expect it at all.

"I wanted to kiss you that night, did you know?"

"What night?" Richie asks, seriously confused.

"That night, 24 years ago, in the party at Derry. You know, that night you took me home because I was fucking wasted?"

Oh, *that* night. The night he knew he was still head over his heels for him.

"Are you serious?!" Richie asks incredulously.

"I am, yeah. I've always wanted to kiss you. And I was so desperate because you stopped paying attention to me. And that night at the party... I saw you and you were dancing and not giving a fuck. All I wanted was to kiss you," Eddie sighs softly, smiling sadly to himself with his eyes downcast. "But then I saw you talking to that blonde guy and kissing him, and well, I figured out you weren't into me."

Marcus. He didn't know Eddie saw them, especially not because he

acted surprised when he named him.

"Wait, you saw us-?"

"Kissing? Yeah."

"But you never told anything to anyone. Why?"

"Because first of all, it was not of my business who did you kiss or not, Richie. Secondly, because it was you. I would have never done anything to hurt you. And third, well, because I wanted to kiss you, too, so it would have been shitty of me to give you a hard time for that. Let me tell you, though, I really hated that guy that night."

"Is that why you were drunk?" Richie asks.

"Yes. No. Kind of." Eddie sighs. "I was already tipsy when I got to the party, because I knew you were going to be there and I was a trainwreck. Stan tried to calm me down but I was just so nervous. And then I saw you with him and suddenly I found myself drinking more because I couldn't stand the idea that you wanted to kiss him but not me. I couldn't blame you from choosing him over me, though...he was pretty cute himself, you know, seemed like one of those guys taken out from a movie."

No, no, no, Eddie, I would have chosen you over him a gazillion times, Richie wants to scream.

"And when you walked me back home all I wanted to do was just kiss the fuck out of you, but then I also thought that if I did something you were going to scream at me because we weren't really at speaking terms at that moment. After that night, I barely saw you anymore."

"I wouldn't. I wouldn't have screamed at you."

"You wouldn't have?"

"Eddie, I literally fell in love with you when I was 13 and I've been lost on you ever since. That night when I took you home, all I wanted to do was kiss you, too, and when you told me that you loved me, I literally felt my heart jump into my throat."

Eddie gazes back at Richie, silent, before a smile spreads across his face and he looks back out across the horizon.

"Took us long enough, didn't it?"

"Yes, yes it did."

But we are together now, Eddie. That's all that matters, Richie thinks to himself.

"Can I ask you a question?"

"Sure," Eddie replies.

"You told me you got a divorce about two weeks ago. Was it after reading Stan's letter?"

Eddie smiles and nods.

"Yes, yes it was. Stan's words encouraged me to do what I always wanted to do."

So Richie was right. He smiles as well.

"Do you have a place to stay back home?" Richie asks, realizing that Myra probably got their house.

"Kinda. I've been staying in a hotel these days."

"You could crash at my place." He suggest. "Only if you want to, I don't want you to feel-"

"Richie?" Eddie interrupts him. "I'd love to."

"What do you want to go back to Derry for? Are you crazy or something?" Eddie asks Richie one morning in which Richie didn't go to work. They've been living together for half a year now. Richie's never felt better..

"I can't tell, it's a surprise."

"Richie, Derry is literally the last place I want to go to, all that town

does is scaring the shit out of me."

"I really, *really* need to show you something, Eds. You'll have to trust me."

Eddie stares at him and Richie rises up his eyebrows, little pout in his face.

"Ugh, fine. But you'll be the one driving us there," Eddie says, rolling his eyes.

It doesn't take them long to arrive, not when Richie drives like crazy and gives Eddie several mini-anxiety attacks in quick succession. He tries but fails to lecture Richie on safety rules and speeding norms, but they finally make it to Derry.

Richie pulls his car over next to the bridge and steps out of the car to open Eddie's door. Eddie looks confused, but Richie smiles at him and Eddie just follows him. It doesn't take long for him to find what he was looking for. There it is, in between many other names, a secret he carved in 27 years ago.

"Look."

"What should I've been looking at at?" Eddie asks, squinting his eyes. And then, Richie points at it.

It's an "R + E". He still remembers like if it had been yesterday the day he carved it. It was some days after they did their blood oath, when he realized after the whole-asssummer that he was completely gone for that hypochondriac kid who acted like a little shit and liked to kick his glasses out of his face. And he loved all of that because he was Eddie, *his* little shit.

"Wow. When-when did you do that?"

"After we sent It back to sleep. But now, the initials have kind of faded away, so... I was wondering if maybe we could carve them again? Together?"

Eddie kisses him.

"I'd love that."

Richie goes first. He carves in the "+" and Eddie's initial, and then Eddie does the same with Richie's initial. And then it happens. When Eddie turns around, Richie is already on his knees.

"Richie, what are you doing?" he asks, and Richie can't help but smile. His heart pounds a thousand beats per second in anticipation.

"I've been madly, completely in love with you for almost three decades, and trust me when I tell you that I've never felt for anyone the way I feel for you. And I don't think I will ever feel this way about anyone else. And these six months with you have been the happiest, *the happiest*, in my life, and I just know I want to build up my life with you. So Eddie Kaspbrack, *my Eds*, do you want to marry me?"

Eddie comes down to his knees, so that they are eye-level. He is grinning, smile wide open and crinkles by his eyes, and Richie thinks he may be about to start crying because his eyes are glossy.

"Yes, Richie, I will. Of course I will. God, I love you so much."

"I love you so much, too. So, so much."

Richie's face starts hurting from smiling so hard. They kiss, sweetly and tenderly, with just lips brushing softly against each other. They really are going to spend the rest of their lives together. They both giggle into the kiss.

EPILOGUE.

They haven't been sleeping that well. It's difficult to do so when you have a kid who wakes up at night, and the baby they adopted a month ago changed up their entire sleeping schedule. Still, though, it was completely worth every second. It didn't take long for them to decide that they wanted to be parents. They got married two months after Richie proposed to him on the bridge, and one year after, they just knew that they were ready to start a new adventure. Being dads and building up a new family was something they both were thrilled

about doing, so it was even better than they had expected.

But now that their little kid is two months old, people can start visiting him -or the other way round- and it's only natural that they are driving him so that the other Losers can meet him.

They all gather together at Ben and Bev's. They are expecting, and Bev is seven months pregnant, so she doesn't want to move much. Bill is there alone because his wife stayed back home filming a new movie, and Mike's girlfriend is out of town, visiting her parents. So it's just them: the Losers and their new son.

Bev picks him up, smiling hard, tracing her fingers over his delicate face, and Richie can't help but grin at the sight.

"So, what's he called?" Bill asks, smiling at the baby who stares back at him with open, curious eyes from Bev's arms.

"Stan. We named him Stan," Eddie replies.

Mike grins at the name, the look in his eyes nostalgic at the reference to their lost friend.

"Hi, Stan," Ben waves, grinning at the baby.

Richie used to think that nothing lasts forever, especially not good moments. But now, he's sure that some of them do.

Well, thoughts? Please, please, if you enjoyed it, leave comment, and if you didn't and still wanna share your opinion, do it!

Jess

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